

CHAPTER 3: INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

With a pre-historical and historical perspective, we're better able to understand Skinner Butte Park as we see it today. It is a complex picture, and one that is influenced by thousands of people and the changing ideas, attitudes and needs of generations of Eugene residents. This snapshot, taken as the master plan is developed, must serve as the base line from which we move into the future. What is it, then, that we see today?

Natural Resources

Several distinct types of habitat are present in Skinner Butte Park. Although the natural areas are characteristically urban, existing in varying degrees of integrity and succession, each currently provides an important component of habitat in the downtown Eugene area. The five main habitat types (See Map 4) are typical of natural areas that occur frequently throughout the region, and for decades have been used as a classroom and learning opportunity for local residents.

The North-Side Forest:

Occurring primarily on the north side of Skinner Butte, this area is characterized by mature Douglas fir up to 150 years old (or older), bigleaf maple and younger grand fir. In the absence of disturbance and fire, this area is succeeding towards a mixed forest of hardwood and true fir. The middle story is composed largely of osoberry with

scattered hazelnut, serviceberry and ninebark, with an understory of sword fern and various perennials such as false Solomon's seal and trillium.

Remnant Oak Savanna Transition:

Primarily occurring along the southern edge of the north-side forest, from the western edge of the butte across the summit to the eastern edge of the butte, this transition zone is characterized by both young and mature Oregon white oak, several madrone, and an understory of snowberry, poison oak, ninebark, hazelnut and serviceberry. This habitat type, a remnant of once common to the Willamette Valley and representing what probably existed in some areas on Skinner Butte, is slowly disappearing as Douglas fir begins to take hold around the oak trees. This transition to a Douglas fir forest is representative of a common sight around the region, and is valuable as an example of an indigenous habitat type that has become largely extinct.

Upland Prairie:

Two small areas of remnant savanna prairie exist on Skinner Butte: one on the western face of the butte above "The Columns" climbing area, and one on the eastern face of the butte between the EWEB reservoir and the East Skinner Butte Historic District. These areas are characterized by steep, rocky slopes populated by some remnant native grasses, including Romer's fescue, and numerous native forbes and grasses. A plant survey of the western area conducted by Salix Associates in the spring

of 2000 indicates a high level of diversity and the presence of several species of native plants that have become locally uncommon. Upland savanna prairie is also an endangered habitat type, and highly valuable for preservation.

South Skinner Butte Mixed Forest:

Much of this area is in transition from the original upland prairie habitat towards a mixed hardwood and conifer forest. Some of this transition is occurring through the natural succession of native trees and shrubs, although a larger percentage is as a result of human activity in conjunction with beautification projects, as well as the rapid advance of invasive species. Forest types include dense groves of incense cedar, stands of bigleaf and Norway maple, Mazard cherry, Douglas fir, madrone, giant sequoia, pine and others. Other areas are dominated by thickets of predominantly invasive species such as English hawthorn, Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry. Mostly because these forested areas are young, they do not support the diversity of native plants characteristic of older, native forest. A seed bed of dormant native upland prairie species lies beneath the many areas of the transitional forest and dense cover of invasive species. Previous restoration work has shown that some upland prairie species return quickly when the covering vegetation is removed.

Willamette River:

A significant stretch of riverbank habitat extends along the northern boundary of the park. This zone varies in width from several feet to several hundred feet, and includes good examples of a diversity of structural features and habitats common to the Willamette River, such as fluvial terraces, a seasonal island, gravel bars and a small backwater slough. Vegetation in this area is dominated by willow, dogwood and alder along the more stable river bank edges, large cottonwood throughout the terrace areas, and mature bigleaf maple, Douglas fir and Oregon white oak on the steep bank between the upper and lower terrace, and along the edge of the upper terrace. Several significant tree specimens are found in this area. Understory vegetation includes snowberry, osoberry, and ninebark and a

range of native herbaceous species. Much of the riparian zone is also dominated by invasive species such as Himalayan blackberry, English ivy and reed canary grass.

A Landscape Under Siege

Skinner Butte Park is under attack by invasive plants. Most of us don't recognize them for what they are. But they're here, and new invasive species are arriving every day. Every native landscape in the world is undergoing the same kinds of dramatic change, but in an urban area with a mild climate, good soils and plenty of water, the effects are dramatic.

The changes are easy to see when you know what to look for. The forest on the north side of Skinner Butte is covered with a carpet of dark green, glossy English ivy. This ivy has spread enormously in recent decades, and has threatened to literally choke the life out of the forest and other native habitats. Ivy covers the ground and robs native plants of light, and competes for nutrients and water. Most native plants are suppressed under the green carpet. What was once a diverse forest floor of annuals, perennials, ferns and wildflowers is smothered, along with the creatures that depend on them. The ivy also grows quickly high into the branches of trees, reaching towards the light and eventually shading out and killing the host tree.

For several years, efforts have been underway to control the ivy. Crews have concentrated on removing it from the trees, cutting the stems where they sprout up from the forest floor. Other groups of volunteers, botanists and ecologists are experimenting with removing ivy from the ground. New evidence shows that, once the carpet of ivy is taken away, the native plants are quick to return. This is good news for forest habitats in many city parks, including Hendricks Park, where aggressive, organized efforts are underway to control ivy in the park by the year 2010.

Other invasive plants are contributing to the decline of Skinner Butte Park's native ecosystems. Plants like Himalayan blackberry, Portugal laurel, English laurel,



North Side Forest



Remnant Oak Savanna Transition



Upland Prairie



South Skinner Butte Mixed Forest



Willamette River

English ivy, shown here, can spread quickly throughout the landscape by birds. Ideally, ivy should be controlled before it has a chance to set fruit.



Scotch broom, English hawthorn and Norway maple are quickly taking over large areas of the butte and river banks. Today, very little remains of the original habitats that were once plentiful within the park. Although there are a number of factors that contribute to this, including management, development and human use, the threat posed by invasive plants is seen as perhaps the greatest.

Invasive plants cause other, more human-related problems, as well. Almost always, the areas that people perceive as most dark and unfriendly are dominated by invasive plants. As a result, legitimate users tend to shy away from natural areas in the park, and these areas are frequently given over to undesirable uses such as illegal camping, drinking and drug use. Studies have shown that humans have an affinity for the natural beauty of healthy, diverse, native plant communities. Interestingly,

Current erosion control includes armoring banks with riprap as shown here. This is seen as an emergency measure. Non-structural reinforcement improves habitat and is the preferred method.



people are naturally drawn to these areas and feel refreshed and comforted by them. Likewise they are repelled by dark, crowded areas of low biological diversity. A certain amount of the discomfort associated with overgrown or invasive-dominated natural areas in the park may be related to this phenomenon.

Riverbank Stabilization

Since the construction of the I-105 freeway in 1962, the banks of the Willamette River in the western portion of Skinner Butte Park have been rapidly eroding. To construct the freeway, a portion of the north river bank was extended into the river and armored with rip-rap, thus increasing the speed of water flow through this area and directing it towards the south bank. Several flood events triggered large-scale erosion along this bank. A typical pattern occurs when a large cottonwood tree is undercut and falls into the river, leaving a large gap of exposed soil on the high bank. High water forms an eddy in the gap that accelerates the forces of erosion in a downstream direction. Several efforts have been undertaken to correct this problem, including the installation of gabion baskets (rock-filled wire baskets) in the early 1970s, and an emergency stabilization project using rip-rap in the later 1990s. Although the more recent effort appears to be resisting the forces of erosion, the gabion baskets appear to be undercut and are in danger of failure.

A long-term solution to this problem will be necessary to protect the park from further erosion. Current management policies for riparian areas, including those associated with the listing of native Willamette River salmon species through the Endangered Species Act, discourage the use of structural stabilization techniques such as rip-rap and gabions. Non-structural stabilization such as terracing and planting of stabilizing vegetation is a preferred method that helps increase riparian and aquatic habitat value. In particular, the creation of lower flood terraces is known to provide refuge and salmon fry migrating towards the ocean.

Salmon Recovery

The decline of salmon and steelhead runs in northwest rivers is another story with roots in the arrival of Euro-American immigrants (see Chapter 2). Two major factors have contributed to this. One is a decline in water quality, which began with agriculture and logging. These activities released soil into the water, and contributed to flooding and dramatic cutting of stream beds. Other effects of agriculture include high levels of nutrients flowing into the river from livestock, and, later in the 20th century, widespread use of fertilizers and pesticides. Urbanization and industry such as paper mills have also greatly impacted the river through chemical toxins, sewage, oil and gasoline from cars, and increased runoff from paving and buildings.

The other major factor contributing to the decline of salmon is the rapid disappearance of diverse habitat needed by salmon during different stages of their life cycle. While early logging practices destroyed breeding areas in upland streams, the Willamette River has also been changed dramatically by construction of numerous flood control and hydroelectric dams. Over the years, the channel has been transformed through engineered banks and dams from a meandering, mile-wide system of diverse sloughs, gravel bars and flood plains, to a single channel (a process called "channelization"), often flanked by urban development or agriculture (see "Riverbank Stabilization," this chapter). This drastically reduced the amount of other aquatic habitat types needed by salmon - in particular young salmon.

The cumulative effect of these factors has been devastating to salmon populations, and in March of 1999, the spring Chinook salmon in the upper Willamette River basin was listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. The final protective rules for the Upper Willamette Spring Chinook were published on July 10, 2000 and became effective on January 8, 2001.

In November 1999, the City of Eugene formed the Eugene ESA/Salmon Team to proactively look for ways to protect and aid the recovery of listed salmon species. Among the many City programs and policies that already contribute towards a healthy river, the Salmon Team was charged with assessing habitat, and reviewing City activities and City policies. For more information see the Eugene/ESA Salmon Recovery Program at <http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/salmon>.

Given the reduction in the river's overall complexity through channelization, a higher burden is placed on the remaining riverbank areas to realize plans for salmon recovery. Skinner Butte Park lies adjacent to a stretch of the Willamette River nearly a mile long.

Particularly in an urban area, this provides a good opportunity to contribute to the health of the aquatic ecosystem. The use and management of land near the river affects aquatic habitat through water quality and the transfer of healthy levels of nutrients into the aquatic system. Development efforts recommended through the master plan should proactively respond to these issues both in terms of land use and the details of construction.

Perhaps more importantly, the park's prominent location near downtown, as well as its diversity of habitat types, make Skinner Butte Park an excellent place to educate the community about the relationship of human use and management of land to salmon recovery and water quality issues in general. Clearly, the basis for change in the community must be effected through its individuals. Basic concepts, such as how salmon use the lower river terraces, why salmon are present in the river year-round, how land use affects water quality and habitat, and how the river we see today has changed over the last 150 years, are all good candidates for interpretation in the park.

Skinner Butte Park provides a good opportunity to contribute to the health of the aquatic ecosystem, and to educate the community about salmon recovery





The Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House, shown here in the late 19th century, is an important and charismatic example of Skinner Butte Park's important cultural resources

Skinner Butte Park is unquestionably the most historically significant of Eugene's parks

Cultural Resources

As the birthplace of the city and the modern community, Skinner Butte Park itself is a unique historical resource. Unquestionably, it is the most historically significant resource in the Eugene park system. There are also a number of significant cultural resources that persist within Skinner Butte Park, the most prominent of which are described in the Oregon Cultural Resource Inventory as follows:

- » The Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House
- » Lamb Cottage
- » The big "O"
- » The big "E"
- » W 2nd Avenue Skinner's Cabin Marker
- » Lincoln Street Skinner's Cabin Marker (replaced)
- » Basalt quarry
- » Skinner Butte (EWEB) Reservoir (1926)
- » Basalt wall

Other cultural resources, such as the cross, the original Lincoln Street cabin marker and the old reservoirs have been removed or replaced. Still other features, such as the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and the Lane County Veteran's of Foreign Wars Memorial, have contemporary cultural

value but are not old enough to be of historic significance. There may also be other cultural resources in the park that exist but are not cataloged. These resources are key to the function and role of the park as a cultural foundation for the community, and are particularly valuable for their public accessibility. Most of these features are not interpreted, and represent an opportunity to expand public knowledge of Eugene's cultural heritage.

Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House

Situated on the southern foot of Skinner Butte, this is perhaps the most well-known and significant of the park's cultural resources. The house, completed in 1888 by Dr. Thomas Shelton, marks the north-south axis of the city, and is among the most significant historic homes in the region. The Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson (SMJ) House and associated tax lot are managed cooperatively by various departments of the City of Eugene and the Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House Associates, a private not-for-profit group organizing special community and history-related events, interpretation and general maintenance of the house. The house represents tremendous potential as a focus for history-related aspects of the park, and as a gateway to the park from the downtown area.

The SMJ House Historic Landscape Master Plan (see Ch. 4) outlines numerous, detailed recommendations for improvements to enhance the function and landscape history of this area, and should be evaluated for implementation. For example, the sixty-foot wide right-of-way aligned with Willamette Street serves as the south access to Skinner Butte Park, as well as alternative access to the SMJ House. Parking for both trail users and visitors to the SMJ House is currently inadequate, and the situation will continue unless the City is able to acquire additional land in this area. Ya-Po-Ah Terrace, a retirement community adjacent to the SMJ House, owns vacant land just south of the SMJ House, north of the 3rd/4th Connector, and contiguous with the Willamette Street right-of-way. The SMJ

House Historic Landscape Master Plan points out that an opportunity exists for the City to negotiate with property owners to see if shared parking, or a purchase of the land, could be arranged to facilitate the parking needs of the SMJ House and the park in the future.

Skinner’s Cabin and Applegate Trail

The only modern interpretations of the cultural heritage of the site, the Skinner’s Cabin replica and the Applegate Trail Interpretive Center, have been successful introductions into the park. Built through volunteer efforts and partnerships, including the Applegate Trail Committee and Eugene Rotary Club, these interpretive features draw visitors from outside of the region as part of the story of western Euro-American settlement. They are generally accepted as among the most site-appropriate uses for Skinner Butte park, and serve as the cornerstone for future expansion of education about regional history and pre-history.

East-Skinner Butte Historic District

The eastern foot of Skinner Butte is the oldest designated historic residential district in the city of Eugene. Here, early settlers of the region built homes above the muddy valley floor that are among the most historically significant and intact within the city. Designation as a historic district places a high priority on the preservation of this neighborhood’s historic integrity. As an abutting land use, the park should respect and, where possible, enhance this aspect

Public Art

Two significant piece of public art are present in the park. The “whale” sculptures, dating from the late 1950s, are a remnant of an early playground just west of Lamb Cottage. The “Solar System” project, which stretches along the bike path system, is represented in Skinner Butte Park by the planets Saturn and Jupiter. These art pieces are maintained through a plan established by the Facility Management Division.

Park Facilities

Skinner Butte Park offers a variety of basic park furniture and amenities, including a playground, a restroom, picnic areas, benches, lights, drinking fountains and trash receptacles as well as a variety of unique features (see Map 2: Existing Site Features).

Ball Field

A small, informal softball field represents the only organized sports-type facility in Skinner Butte Park. Although this field is too small and irregular for scheduled or competitive use, public comments and stakeholder interviews have revealed that it is useful for non-programmed, informal games in association with family events and social occasions held at the nearby park core picnic area. Also, historic reports indicate that the ball field was used prior to the park’s dedication in 1914, lending it a sense of historic significance. It is unknown if the field is still in its original location.

Aging Infrastructure

Many recreational facilities in the park have outlived their life expectancy, having changed little over several decades. This is evident to some extent in most areas of the park, as emphasized by chipped or broken equipment, crooked tables, bent or leaning light poles, uneven or broken pavement and other visible symptoms of age.

Given the prognosis for growth and a regional need for quality park infrastructure, this is a significant concern for the future functionality of the park. In addition, similar to the psychological effects of impacted natural environments (see “Natural Resources”, this chapter), the condition of the built environment will inevitably affect the culture of the park. It is possible that the condition of the infrastructure in Skinner Butte Park contributes to the kinds of uses that take place there. Well-maintained, quality infrastructure, therefore, is necessary not only for the functionality of the park, but also to develop a positive culture promoting frequent, legitimate use.

Many facilities in Skinner Butte Park have outlived their life expectancy

Main Areas of Traditional Park Facilities

- ▶ Main “park core” picnic and playground area across from the facilities buildings, north of Cheshire Avenue
- ▶ Skinner Butte summit and overlook area
- ▶ Picnic area above the historic stone wall at the north foot of Skinner Butte.

Special Park Facilities

- ▶ Campbell Senior Center and wood shop
- ▶ Shelton-McMurphy-Johnson House
- ▶ Skinner’s cabin replica and Applegate Trail Interpretive Center
- ▶ Lamb Cottage
- ▶ “The Columns” climbing area

Other Facilities with Non-Park Uses

- ▶ Facility Management Division offices, shop and storage buildings
- ▶ The Lincoln Yard
- ▶ Child Care, Inc.
- ▶ Emergency communications tower on Skinner Butte
- ▶ EWEB reservoir

There are also some relatively new features in the park, such as the Campbell Senior Center, and the Skinner's cabin replica. These features are more in keeping with a desirable image for the park, and set a good precedent for future improvements.

Transportation and Access

As a recreational hub for the downtown area, and a major node on the urban Willamette Greenway system, circulation and access are an important consideration for Skinner Butte Park. Multi-modal access is already reasonably accommodated in the park, primarily through the bike path, and users report arriving by a number of different means. According to the citywide survey, nearly 60% of park users arrive by car, while about 35% report arriving by bicycle. Only about one in ten visitors walk to the park, which indicates a need for better connection to downtown and neighborhoods.

Vehicular Access

Skinner Butte Park is primarily accessed by vehicle through Cheshire Avenue as the main east-west thoroughfare, connected by High Street at the east end and by Lawrence and Washington streets at the west end. The summit of Skinner Butte is

accessed by Skinner Butte Loop, connecting with Lincoln Street to the west and Third Avenue to the east. No data for traffic volumes is available.

Although there are several vehicular access routes, the park can be difficult to find and navigate by car for anyone unfamiliar with the area. A lack of good signage and poor visual connection to downtown or major roads are contributing factors. Despite its relative remoteness, the park has experienced problems in recent decades with high traffic volumes and speed, particularly on Cheshire Avenue. Wide travel lanes, up to 15 feet, contribute to high traffic speeds on Cheshire. Currently, raised crosswalks at several locations help slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety along this street.

With the exception of the High Street access, vehicular access points to the park tend to be unattractive and are not marked or celebrated. The Lincoln Street and Washington Street access points are among the least attractive. Lincoln Street appears to be among the most popular access routes to Skinner Butte, whereas Washington Street is a logical main entry to Cheshire Avenue and the west end of the park. Lawrence Street is less attractive as a main access route because it bisects the east Whiteaker neighborhood.

Bicycle Access

The riverbank bike path provides excellent bicycle access to Skinner Butte Park. The bike path has been continually expanded and improved over the years, most recently through the addition of the new DeFazio bridge just east of the park, and other bicycle connection improvements associated with the Ferry Street Bridge project. Many bicyclists also use the bike path along Washington to access the riverbank route via the access path near the Child Care Inc. building. Nearly 9 out of 10 park visitors report using the bike path, even if they arrive by vehicle to use the park as a jump-off point to access the rest of the bike path and greenway system. The bike path is shared by walkers, runners, roller bladers and others. Conflicts have been reported in the more congested areas

The citywide survey shows the bike path as the most frequently used facility in Skinner Butte Park

The South Bank Trail portion of the Riverbank Trail System, shown here in Skinner Butte Park, is a major alternative transportation corridor and citywide recreational amenity



of the park, for example near the playground and picnic area. This may indicate a need for greater awareness among path users, speed regulation features, and/or separation of bicycles and other travel modes.

Bicycle access to the park from other areas is less convenient. Bicyclists accessing the butte summit have reported conflicts with car traffic on the narrow, unmarked roads. Among the least convenient of access routes is from downtown, where no clear avenue exists to the park. Visitors wishing to enter the park from downtown must find their way around the railroad tracks to the east or west, then continue relatively long distances through neighborhood areas before entering the park. There is also a lack of adequate bike racks and bicycle-oriented signage in the park.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to Skinner Butte Park is generally adequate where bicycle access is also convenient. The South Bank Trail and the Washington Street connection through Washington Jefferson Park are the most easily accessible pedestrian entry points.

There is, however, no clear pedestrian connection from downtown to the park. Historically, an unofficial pedestrian access route has existed from the north end of Willamette Street, across the railroad tracks and the recently developed parking lot north of the tracks, to the trail access point near the Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House. Since the city was laid out in the 1850s, with

Many pedestrians use Lincoln Street to access the park in the absence of a good alternative



The connection from Skinner Butte Park to Willamette Street, shown here, was originally intended as the main entrance to the park. The access is currently cut off by parking lots and railroad tracks.

Willamette Street as the main north-south axis between the summit of Skinner Butte and Spencer Butte, there have been several official attempts to implement a safe pedestrian avenue along this historic, clearly intuitive route. Although this route is still used, as evidenced by the worn paths and recurring damage to fences, it is currently unsafe and generally discouraged by the railroad and other property owners. Developing this path remains the single most important opportunity for connecting downtown Eugene with Skinner Butte Park.

An extensive network of trails exists on the butte and along the river bank that provide pedestrian access to the butte summit and through various natural areas. Although these trails are used frequently, they are generally in very poor condition. Packed dirt surfaces become muddy in the winter and are prone to erosion, and several main trail routes developed by the CCC in the 1930s have also been severely worn. Due to both poor trail conditions and lack of trail signs, many cutoffs exist that denude native vegetation, cause compaction and exacerbate erosion. Many unofficial trails also exist throughout natural areas on the butte and along the river that are frequented primarily by homeless and illegal campers. Currently, many report feeling unsafe when using the trail system. It is likely that the lack of signage, poor trail conditions, overgrowth of invasive vegetation and negative use patterns together contribute to an unsafe feeling in areas of the trail system.

Skinner Butte Park needs a better connection to downtown

This view faces south from the summit of Skinner Butte towards Spencer Butte. The relationship between downtown Eugene and Skinner Butte Park is very important to both the city and the park



Context and Surrounding Areas

The city of Eugene, quite literally, grew up around Skinner Butte Park. Over the past 150 years, the area that is now Skinner Butte Park has been surrounded by a diverse and rapidly changing landscape. What began as native prairie gave way to agriculture, and eventually to industry. Today, the park exists surrounded by elements of each of these.

Downtown

Skinner Butte Park is within reach for people who work in the downtown area, and provides important relief and relaxation during lunchtime, and before and after work hours. As downtown develops as an active urban and mixed use center, this function will become more important. Similarly, the park has tremendous potential to serve as an easily-accessible recreational experience and orientation point for visitors to Eugene staying in the downtown area. Skinner Butte Park is a likely focus for

visitors wishing to assess the quality of the community, and therefore and is an important investment for the local economy and job markets.

Skinner Butte, and to a lesser degree the rest of Skinner Butte Park, is an important element in the character of downtown Eugene. It visually anchors the city center when seen from many local viewpoints such as College Hill, Spencer Butte, the south hills and the freeway. The natural character of the butte, which has often emerged as an important theme in management discussions over the years, sets off a pleasing contrast to urban development and helps lend Eugene its “green” appeal.

Seen from the other direction, downtown is also an essential part of the experience of Skinner Butte Park. From the butte, one gains a vantage point over the urban center in the foreground, surrounded in the distance by the ridgeline and south hills. Once again it is the juxtaposition of urban and natural, seen from within the naturalistic environment of the park, that is particularly important. The urban elements of downtown, however, impact the park in unavoidable ways. The process of industrialization brought the railroad, highways and cars, power lines and lights that are an inescapable part of the park experience.

Neighborhoods

The park is bordered to the southeast by the East Skinner Butte Historic District (see “Cultural Resources,” this chapter), and to the southwest by the Whiteaker Neighborhood. The park serves a “neighborhood park” function to residents in both areas, and is adequately equipped to do so. The family, civic and passive recreational aspects of Skinner Butte Park make it a good neighbor, offering relatively few negative impacts often associated with active recreational facilities such as sports fields. Although special events may cause parking overflow into neighborhood areas, regular park use typically does not.

Skinner Butte Park provides important relief, recreation and relaxation for people who live and work downtown

Agricultural Remnants

Two community gardens operate just downstream from the Skinner Butte Park. In the 1970s, the park itself hosted a third community garden, as well as a private floral nursery in an area since cleared for the Cheshire Avenue extension (see Chapter 2). In addition, the Owen Rose Garden continues to flourish just west of the park on the other side of the I-105 bridge. These botanical and agricultural remnants reflect the early culture of Euro-American settlers who were drawn to the area for its rich soils and mild climate, and continue to bear their influence on the development of the park. As one example, the Campbell Senior Center offers an attractive floral display for its patrons, and as a backdrop for private occasions.

Skinner Butte Mixed-Use Area

This industrially-zoned area at the southwest foot of Skinner Butte is largely composed of older industrial and commercial buildings of moderate size. Examples of uses include wholesale storage and distribution, auto body repair, electrical supply, machine shops, etc., as well as small commercial uses such as offices, a cafe, music store, etc. Most industrial uses are not ideally compatible with a public park, and tend to detract from the character of the Lincoln Street entrance to the park. Following a redistricting procedure, however, this area has experienced a recent trend of newer commercial uses, such as REI, which are more compatible with the park. High-density residential and mixed use are well suited development types for this area, including the Lincoln Yard area, in terms of park compatibility.

Public Infrastructure

Before the construction of I-105, the experience of Skinner Butte Park would have certainly been more pleasing than it is today. The noise from the freeway is significant, both from the east-west section across the river, and from the north-south section along the western edge of the park.

Similarly, the Ferry Street Bridge borders the park on the east side. This, along with the new DeFazio pedestrian bridge, helps define the boundaries of the park with

interesting architectural elements. Unlike the I-105 bridge, they also provide good access to and from the park for car, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Noise from car traffic on the bridge does, however, also impact the park.

Conversely, Skinner Butte Park provides an attractive view for people traveling these major roads. For many people entering the community via Coburg Road or I-105, Skinner Butte Park is an important and inviting landmark.

Other elements of public infrastructure surround the park, including the EWEB offices and facilities just east of the park. The presence of these facilities, including the reservoir located in the park, is a reminder of Skinner Butte's practical role in the early development of the community. Although these elements are often seen as detracting from the park experience, there is potential to embrace them through interpretation.

On the other bank of the Willamette River, commercial and office development has created a more urban edge. Although some opinions suggest that this detracts from the park experience, it is also an interesting and successful contrast. The mix of urban and natural landscapes is beneficial to the livability of the city. Similarly, the park provides an attractive and inviting view from the development on the north bank of the river.

Public infrastructure both defines and impacts the park

The Ferry Street Bridge helps define the park, provide access and add an interesting architectural element. Traffic noise, however, detracts from the park experience.

